

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T CAIRO 11040

EXDIS (DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, IS, US, XF
SUBJECT: ISRAELI CABINET DISCUSSION OF RESOLUTION 242

REF: (A) STATE 97781 (TOSEC 40099), (B) STATE 97737

1. ALTHOUGH SUBJECT AROSE ONLY BRIEFLY DURING SECRETARY'S TALK WITH KAMEL EARLY THIS MORNING, KAMEL HAD RAISED IT WITH ME AS WE WERE WAITING AT THE AIRPORT TO MEET SECRETARY'S AIRCRAFT. AT THE TIME, GOE HAD HAD ONLY PRESS REPORTS OF ISRAELI STATEMENT. ON BASIS THESE PRESS REPORTS, KAMEL WAS SKEPTICAL THAT THE ISRAELIS HAVE IN ANY WAY CHANGED THEIR POSITION ON THE APPLICABILITY OF THE WITHDRAWAL PROVISION OF 242 TO THE WEST BANK.

2. BY THE TIME I ARRIVED AT THE OFFICE THIS MORNING,

REF B CONTAINING FULL TEXT HAD BEEN RECEIVED. SINCE KAMEL DID NOT PLAN TO COME TO THE OFFICE UNTIL AROUND NOON, I SENT IT TO AHMED MAHER. IN SUBSEQUENT TELECON WITH HIM I MADE POINT THAT OUR PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE STATEMENT SUGGESTS DAYAN MAY BE MANEUVERING AMONG HIS

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COLLEAGUES TOWARD A BETTER ISRAELI POSITION ON WITHDRAWAL ISSUE. MAHER'S REACTION WAS "PERHAPS SO," BUT HE EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THERE IS NO SIGN OF ANY REAL ISRAELI CHANGE IN THEIR POSITION.

3. I SUGGESTED THAT THE ISRAELI STATEMENT OUGHT TO BE TESTED. WITH THIS IN MIND, GOE SHOULD TAILOR ITS PUBLIC

STATEMENTS TO GIVE PROCESS A CHANCE. MAHER RESPONDED THAT GOE HAS TAKEN CARE IN ITS PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO AVOID PLAYING INTO BEGIN'S HANDS, BUT COMMENTED GOE CAN HARDLY BE EXPECTED TO PRETEND THAT ISRAELI STATEMENT REPRESENTS IMPROVEMENT. I SUGGESTED THAT NO ONE EXPECTS GOE TO PRETEND, BUT POINT IS THAT EGYPTIAN PUBLIC STATEMENTS

SHOULD AVOID APPEARANCE OF DISCOUNTING OR REJECTING STATEMENT. I REITERATED GOE SHOULD ALLOW ISRAELI INTENTIONS TO BE TESTED. MAHER AGREED, BUT SAID IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR EGYPTIANS TO HIDE THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT. (I WILL TAKE SAME LINE WITH KAMEL AND WITH SADAT WHEN I SEE THE LATTER TOMORROW IN HURGADA.)

4. TODAY'S AHRAH CARRIES ANALYSIS OF ISRAELI STATEMENT AND CONCLUDES THERE IS NO CHANGE IN ISRAELI POSITION RE WEST BANK/GAZA. COMMENT: REGARDLESS OF ANY GLOSS WE MAY TRY TO PUT ON IT, THIS IS LIKELY TO BE THE GENERAL EGYPTIAN CONCLUSION. EILTS

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